

The Ashland District Connection

Connecting laity and clergy to make disciples of Jesus Christ

Ashland District
Virginia Conference

November/December 2008

on the Web at www.ashlandvaumc.org

Mark V. Ogren
District Superintendent
ashlanddds@vaumc.org

Lyn Robeson
Office Manager
ashlanddistrict@vaumc.org

Lynn Manley
Administrative Assistant
LynnManley@vaumc.org

Larry Tubbs
District Lay Leader
TubbsL@verizon.net

District Office: (804) 798-1649

From Our DS

Dear Friends,

Bishop Charlene Kammerer will be our guest preacher for our Ashland District Conference to be held on November 16, 2008, at 4:00 pm at Mechanicsville UMC. The theme for this year's District Conference will be "**All Things New.**" All are welcome whether you are a voting delegate to District Conference or not. In the last 2 years we have had an inspiring worship service, a brief business meeting and then ample time for fellowship during a reception afterwards. Please make every effort to give Bishop Kammerer a warm Ashland District welcome.

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What is - - - **All Things New?**

All Things New is an invitation for the Virginia Conference to live into a new reality for mission. This invitation is twofold: first, we are invited to plant 250 faith communities in the next 30 years and second, we are inviting our existing churches to become renewed. Therefore, **All Things New** is an invitation to plant new churches and to renew our existing churches.

Why do - - - **All Things New?**

The demographics of Virginia tell the primary reason why we should be part of **All Things New**:

- From 1990 – 2005, the population in Virginia increased by 26% while the membership of our conference decreased by 3%. Virginia is expected to grow by more than 25% by 2030.
- Since God is sending so many people to Virginia it is clearly our responsibility to share the gospel and make disciples with all God's children.
- **All Things New** is not a proposal to save churches or even to save our conference.
- **All Things New** is a vision for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ through our existing faith communities and through the planting of new faith communities.

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I look forward to our time of Holy Conferencing at our Ashland District Conference on November 16 at 4:00 pm at Mechanicsville UMC. See you there –

Grace & Peace,
Mark

National Adoption Month

During **National Adoption Month**, we recognize the commitment of adoptive families and caseworkers and renew a pledge to make adoption a more accessible and positive path. Children thrive in loving families where they are nurtured, comforted, and protected. According to the 2000 Census, 2% of children in the United States (1.6 million) are adopted. Currently there are 114,000 children in foster care waiting for adoption; 1500 of those children are in Virginia.

During **National Adoption Month**, you are encouraged to lobby for fairer adoption policies, to get to know individuals and families who have been changed by adoption, to celebrate and support the network of agencies that make adoption placements and provide services to families once placements are finalized, and to possibly answer the call to adopt a child or children.



November 15 is **National Adoption Day**. On this day across the country, courtrooms will be filled with adoption cases, finalizing literally thousands of cases. United Methodist Family Services has been providing adoption services to the children and families of Virginia in a variety of ways

for over 100 years. Currently our regional centers are active in the areas of special needs adoption, foster-to-adopt programs, international adoption, parental placement adoption and post-adoption preservation services. The agency facilitates Adoptive Family Preservation support groups throughout the state. These groups offer ongoing resources to adoptive families. For more information, contact Linda Driver Ray, Community Ministries Coordinator, at lray@umfs.org or call her at 804-254-9692.

Take Care of Our Pastors

Pastors preach service and ministry to others. They are models for a caring and nurturing spirit for parishioners in need. They view sacrifice as just part of the job. Unfortunately, that selfless outlook can come at a price, and all too often the price is personal health and fitness. Insurance data and recent studies indicate that clergy are increasingly struggling with health issues including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, gastrointestinal illness and depression. In addition, with rising health care costs and increasing demands on their time, many ministers forego annual physicals and other services and activities that could improve their health. It's a disturbing diagnosis that caught the attention of Duke Divinity School in Durham, NC. Last year, the United Methodist-related school launched a seven-year, \$12 million Clergy Health Initiative, aimed at assessing, tracking and improving the health of nearly every United Methodist pastor in North Carolina. "Many of these health problems might be preventable if pastors had the time and resources to focus on improving their health, and their congregations supported their efforts to do so," said Robin Swift, project director.

Ashland District Leadership Training

Saturday, January 24, 2009, at Shady Grove UMC in Mechanicsville from 8:30am-12:45 pm

Save the date for our annual district training event. Eleven workshops will be held along with a keynote speaker and a joint panel discussion. Brochures will be sent to your churches very soon. One of the workshops will be on *Training the Choir* with the invitation to choir directors to bring their whole choir.

You've got a friend

With the recent uncertainty in the financial market, we want to remind our Virginia United Methodist community that the Virginia United Methodist Credit Union is available and ready to serve your financial needs. Our deposits are federally insured by the NCUA and we strive to help our members with their financial stewardship through our comprehensive savings products, responsible lending practices and financial literacy programs.

Membership at VUMCU is open to **Clergy and Church Members (including their immediate family members), along with Organizations, Agencies, Institutions and Churches of the Virginia Annual Conference (including their employees).** Call 866-657-0004 or visit our website at www.vumcu.org.

Be sure to vote on November 4th and pray for our country as we elect our new leaders.

Safe Sanctuaries

Advanced training for Safe Sanctuaries will take place on November 15th at Crenshaw UMC at Blackstone, 10 am-4 pm.

Workshop leaders will explore issues of child/youth abuse and safety related to the Internet; how to incorporate new policies and procedures with the use of computers, the Internet, and cell phones into existing child/youth protection policies; screening of volunteers with national background checks; steps needed to be able to safely welcome released sex offenders into the church; and a sharing of success stories and best practices.

Cost is \$25/person which includes lunch. For more information, go to www.vaumc.org, click on "Events" and then the date, or call the office of Anne Davis at 804-521-1138 or 800-768-6040, ext. 138. **Registration deadline is November 10th.**

UMVIM Team Leader TRAINING

Saturday, November 22nd from 9:30 am-3:30 pm at Lakeside Methodist Church in Richmond, is the date to get the training needed to lead a Volunteers in Mission team. Registration is \$10 payable at the door. Deadline to register is November 17th.

Get your registration form from the October *Advocate* or at www.vaumc.org by clicking on "ministries" then "UMVIM."

Note that you have to have a team handbook available from the Atlanta office of UMVIM at 404-377-7424 for \$26.

Registration begins at 8:45 am.



From Our Lay Leader

Grace to you and peace from God the Father,

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ, it's that time again for annual church conferences. With 60 churches on the Ashland District, it takes from September to November to complete the local churches charge conferences. It's with this in mind that I would like to share my thanks and appreciation for our sub-district Lay Leaders who help with these charge conferences.

The following are our sub-district Lay Leaders: Caroline Cluster, Phyllis Howze; Hanover Cluster, David Ankney; King George Cluster, Dan Dietze; King William and Mechanicsville Cluster, Carolyn Williams; Richmond Cluster, Earle "Butch" Kelchner; Spotsylvania Cluster, Jim Sizemore; and Stafford Cluster, Steven Snyder. When you see them around the district, would you join with me in saying "Thank You" for sharing their time, talent and faith.

I was blessed to see 43 Saints take part in the October 4 training of "Authentic Outreach" that was held at Duncan Memorial. Please keep watch for additional training events for Authentic Outreach in spring 2009.

Go Fish



Larry Tubbs

From Your Editor

Larry Tubbs, our hard-working district lay leader, has just reminded us to thank our Cluster Lay Leaders for helping out with our church charge conferences.

Our pastors and laity work very hard to report on each of our churches. We present our accomplishments and our challenges with hope and trust that God will continue to show us better ways of being God's disciples to our neighbors.

One major player in this annual period of examination is our District Superintendent, Mark Ogren. He is our cheerleader and our guide, helping to point us in the direction of truly becoming churches with open hearts, open minds, and open doors.

Most of you have probably heard from your pastor stories of how Mark has pastored them. He has such enthusiasm for his job. I don't know how willing most of us would be to have a fall schedule like the district superintendents in Virginia using most of their evenings and Sunday afternoons visiting all of us. Mark makes us feel as though we are the only church or charge he oversees. And receiving communion from our DS and our district or cluster lay leader is a special time for our church leaders and members. Thank you, Mark, from your churches.



Kate Cook, Editor

Your Church and UMM

So you've heard about mission trips others are doing to help here in the U.S. with hurricanes and tornadoes and floods and other disaster relief efforts.

So you've thought to yourself, that would be something I would really like to do. But I don't know anyone who is going.

Our Ashland District is full of mission volunteers and "wanna be" volunteers. Here's an easy recipe.



At the

June Conference in Roanoke, the Mississippi Bishop, Hope Morgan Ward, told us there were over 7,000 families still living in FEMA trailers from Katrina and other hurricanes.



In September 13 members and friends from the West Hanover charge went to Camp Love in the Biloxi/Gulf Port area of

Mississippi at a cost of under \$400/person.

During that week of volunteer work, the Camp Love volunteer site was completed. Teams now have dormitory rooms to stay in and a lounge to share their stories as well as a kitchen and ample showers and toilets, rather than having to stay in local churches which aren't designed to be hostels.

If you remember from our District Mission Chairman, Gary Gross, reporting from the summer Statesville, NC, trip, volunteers provide \$15 an hour free labor.

At Camp Love, there is a supervisor who can assess your team and know how best to use your volunteers.

The West Hanover Charge is comprised of two very small churches with less than 40 in average Sunday attendance. One of the September volunteers was 80 years old, reluctant to sign up because she wasn't sure she could help. She came home rejoicing in what they had done and seen. Another volunteer was around 70 and she too had not been sure of what she could contribute, but contribute she did.

Wright's Chapel has also been to Camp Love, so there are churches nearby who can guide you. Team leader training is Saturday, November 22nd. Get someone from your church to go. You will be blessed!

Ashland District Calendar for November and December 2008

Date	Time	Event	Location
11/1	9:30 a.m.	District UMM Installation of Officers & Luncheon	Wright's Chapel UMC
11/3	7:30 p.m.	District UMM	Wright's Chapel UMC
11/7-9		Annual Conference UMM Rally	VUMAC
11/8	8:30 a.m.	District Lay Speaking Ministries Training	Regester Chapel UMC
11/9	1:30 p.m.	District Lay Speaking Ministries Training	Regester Chapel UMC
11/10	12:00 p.m.	Mingling With Mark	Fredericksburg UMC
11/10	6:00 p.m.	District Council & Board of Laity Combined Meeting	Aunt Sarah's, Carmel Church
11/11	12:00 p.m.	Mingling With Mark	Duncan Memorial UMC
11/14-16		Conference Middle School Fall Retreat	Eagle Eyrie, Lynchburg
11/15	9:00 a.m.	District UMW Leadership Training	Fredericksburg UMC
11/16	4:00 p.m.	District Conference	Mechanicsville UMC
11/18	7:00 p.m.	District Lay Speaking Committee	Peace UMC
11/22	9:30 a.m.	Conference UMVIM Team Leader Training	Lakeside UMC
11/25	9:30 a.m.	District Committee on Ordained Ministry	District Office
11/26	12:00 p.m.	Closing Early for Thanksgiving Holiday	District Office
11/27		Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday	District Office
12/1	7:30 p.m.	District UMM	Wright's Chapel UMC
12/4	7:00 p.m.	District Board of Church Location & Building	TBA
12/5-7		Conference High School Fall Retreat	Eagle Eyrie, Lynchburg
12/16	9:30 a.m.	District Committee on Ordained Ministry (Tentative)	District Office
12/19	12:00 p.m.	Closing Early for Christmas Holiday	District Office
12/22-1/2		Closed for Christmas Holiday	District Office

VUMAC – Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center

The Ashland District of
The United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 1808
Ashland, VA 23005

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Permit #54
Ashland, VA 23005



Bishop Charlene Kammerer
District Superintendent Mark V. Ogren
District Office Manager Lyn Robeson
District Administrative Assistant, Lynn Manley
District chaplains:
Claudia Stallings, beaverdamumc@embarqmail.com
Robert Lewandowski, revboblew@wink.net
Newsletter Editor Kate Cook, katecook@bealenet.com